

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

I live in the San Francisco Bay Area and travel to the Central Valley and Southern California. I listen to the radio while travelling by car. I am appalled by the lack of choices, especially in terms of news. The so-called news stations (with the exception of NPR) devote at most 1 minute to each story of national interest and cover only 4 to 5 stories an hour, usually two of which are more properly "entertainment news". Obviously with such skimpy coverage the stations can only give headlines. I can travel from the Bay Area to Modesto and to Southern California and hear the same brief report on every station. On the "Talk Radio" stations the choices are limited and are the same choices no matter where I go. In the whole of the Bay Area, in the AM and FM bandwidths combined there are perhaps two stations (NPR and KPFA) that provide alternatives, especially in terms of news and their signals are relatively weak. In contrast there are a number of channels that provide so-called "Christian Programming".

The choices are becoming more and more limited, which I can only attribute to more and more concentrated national ownership.

The same phenomenon is occurring in the broadcast media. Early morning and evening news shows are synchronized - each has commercial breaks at the same time and each covers the same mix of stories in the same way. Broadcast media does face competition from the "All-News/Talk" cable outlets. Those however provide the same stories, with generally the same focus. I attribute this to the fact that they are part of large corporations. Their focus is to turn a profit for those corporations. Hence, stories like the Enron scandal get short shrift because they are not as easy to understand and as compelling as Jon-Benet Ramsey.

Yes, the media responds well in time of national crisis - like 9/11. But it is failing miserably in alerting the citizens to national and international events that may one day cause such emergencies.

Because bandwidth and airwaves are a scarce commodity that belong to the people of the United States, those entities fortunate enough to have a license must have a sense of public responsibility. The large, diversified corporate owners of these licenses have lost their sense of public responsibility.

I oppose any loosening of the regulations pertaining to diverse ownership. Our choices are restricted now. Loosening of these restrictions will further limit our choices to the detriment of this country.

I thank you for the opportunity to comment.